The Interrelations of Structure, Governance and Effective Resource Utilization In Academic Libraries

H. WILLIAM AXFORD

EVER SINCE ITS debut on television, I have been an avid devotee of the video version of Richard Hooker's novel, M*A*S*H. As you may know, M*A*S*H is the acronym for Mobile Army Surgical Hospital, a front-line medical unit which entered the U.S. Army's table of organization during the Korean War. Operating within the range of enemy guns and aided by the blessings of modern technology such as new antibiotics, advanced surgical methods and helicopters for quick evacuation of the wounded, M*A*S*H units achieved a level of performance unique in the annals of military surgery.

The central story line of each weekly episode is the effort of two dedicated, sensitive, highly skilled, and totally iconoclastic army surgeons—Captains Benjamin Franklin Pierce (Hawkeye) and John McIntyre (Trapper)—to concentrate on the unit's mission in the face of more or less constant harrassment from two of their colleagues—Majors Frank Burns and Margaret Houlihan—who, in spite of their medical credentials, are confirmed military bureaucrats. Although the fictional M*A*S*H probably resembles its real-life counterparts in only a superficial way, and the bizarre antics of Hawkeye, Trapper, and their colleagues are exaggerated for the sake of audience appeal, the series does have serious overtones which illustrate the irrationality of war.

Viewed only as entertainment, M*A*S*H is little more than an escapist interlude in which broad and bawdy comedy is superimposed upon one of the grimmest realities of war—the struggle to save the lives of its mutilated victims. However, for anyone who has a serious theoretical interest in the emerging problem of academic library

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governance, especially as it relates to the effective utilization of human resources, the series can be instructive as well as entertaining. Seen through this focus, it is Colonel Henry Blake, the commanding officer of M*A*S*H 4077, not Hawkeye or Trapper, who emerges as the dominant figure. Without Blake's steadfast insistence on the primacy of individual and organizational performance—even though to achieve it under the circumstances in which his unit must function he must close his eyes to constant violations of standard military operating procedures—these two hellraising, but very productive, mavericks would soon be reduced to embittered professional drudges totally at the mercy of the military bureaucracy for the duration of the war. As it is they are key members of a smoothly functioning team whose leader can tolerate almost any kind of unmilitary conduct as long as to do so contributes to the furtherance of the unit's mission.

Colonel Blake succeeds in creating an effective organization because he recognizes the counterproductive forces latent in a situation where highly trained specialists are forced to work within a rigidly structured bureaucracy and takes the proper steps to neutralize them—i.e., eliminating or ignoring any bureaucratic procedure which does not directly contribute to the welfare of the wounded flowing into the hospital from the front. He demands high standards of performance, but will tolerate almost anything in the way of outrageous behavior—e.g., the phony transvestite Klinger—as long as these are met. Consequently, M*A*S*H 4077 functions reasonably uninhibited by the layers of bureaucracy and the strict chain of command which are the essence of a military organization. Herein lies the key to Blake's success as a leader and administrator and the unit's outstanding level of performance. His management style is best illustrated in the novel when he first meets Hawkeye and Trapper after they have been assigned to his command. "You guys," he says, "look like a pair of weirdoes to me, but if you work well I'll hold still for a lot and if you don't it's gonna be your asses."[1]

At this point, the reader might well ask what all of this has to do with the problem of resource allocation and utilization in academic libraries. The answer is simply this: M*A*S*H 4077 and an academic library have more in common than might first meet the eye, and the performance levels achieved and the manner in which they are achieved by the former might be very instructive for the latter. Both organizations exist to provide unique and essential services: M*A*S*H for repairing war-torn bodies, the academic library for challenging and expanding the human mind.[2] Both are very labor-intensive organizations requiring a large cadre of highly trained, well-educated specialists to carry out their respective missions. Consequently, the key factor controlling the performance of both is the effective allocation and use of human resources. Herein, however, ends the similarity.

Colonel Blake's approach to human resource utilization is to create an organization in which performance is the standard against which all else is measured, an organization that values vitality more than order and which, therefore, releases rather than frustrates the creative energies and dedication of the staff. He sees administration as a kind of necessary evil to be reduced to the absolute minimum required to hold the organization together with as little demand on the time, energies and nerves of his team of specialists as possible. In short, he seeks to create an organization which will maximize the flow of available human energy outward to those dependent upon the unit for medical attention and minimize the amount devoted to internal housekeeping and paying allegiance to traditional military protocol. Management, in Blake's view, is a resource which creates the conditions which enable his staff to get on with the organization's mission, not something that in and of itself is directly responsible for delivering medical services.

In contrast, academic library administrators generally tend to view management as the real strength of the organization, with its prime role being the establishment and maintenance of consistent internal procedures. Consequently, they have, in general, tended to create organizations that are more oriented toward authority than performance, and more concerned with order and stability than vitality. As a result, academic libraries more often than not exhibit most of the traits of the classic public service bureaucracy. This is a situation sanctified by tradition, perpetuated by a reward system which values bureaucratic accomplishments more than creative and individual interface with users and, until recently at least, more attuned to the basic attitudes and aspirations of the rank and file of academic librarians than most of us are willing to admit.

In the mid-1960s, several signs appeared on the horizon which gave hope to the belief that academic libraries might move toward new organizational concepts which would place more stress on individual initiative and performance than on the integrity of the traditional power structure. Articles began to appear in the literature on the relevance of business management theory to academic library administration, and a few administrators began to move cautiously in this direction, propelled partly by conviction and partly by the need to come to terms with the militant iconoclasm of several generations of graduates from professional schools and the first indications that funding agencies and governing boards were becoming increasingly aggressive in demanding documentation on institutional performance as budgets continued to spiral upward. A concomitant development was a growing interest among many academic librarians in the benefits of full faculty status, which in turn supplemented and complemented increasing pressures for a more participatory or consultive working

environment and which held out the promise of an enhanced professional image based on recognized individual performance.

These significant developments seemed to point toward radical changes in the traditional library bureaucracy which would revitalize the organization and channel more of its available manpower into programs directly affecting user needs and interests. They promised less complex organizations with fewer administrators, particularly at the middle level, and more direct involvement, consultation and information sharing between top administration and key personnel at all levels. Finally, they gave rise to hopes for a totally new working environment for the highly trained and educated library specialist, an environment rich in opportunities for individual creativity and professional development. In short, toward the last half of the twentieth century, academic librarianship seemed at last on its way to becoming a true profession and consequently a full-fledged partner in the total concerns of the academy.

Unfortunately, there are disturbing indications that these promising trends may succumb to bureaucracy's almost impenetrable defenses against assaults on its sovereignty. All three of the potentially progressive developments of the mid-1960s—the embracing by academic library administrators of management theory and new management techniques developed for and by the private sector; the pressures for a professional working environment more in tune with the requirements for appointment, promotion and retention (coming largely from a new type of graduate from the professional schools); and the aspirations of academic librarians for full faculty status—operationally seem to have coalesced in such a way as to be working against rather than for the advancement of service programs. All seem to be contributing to a trend toward more rather than less complex internal organizations in which the power structure and managerial attitudes of the traditional bureaucratic hierarchy remain largely intact but encumbered by clumsy accretions which inhibit rather than enhance its ability to make timely and effective decisions with respect to changing patterns of user needs and a reversal of what has been an upward trend in funding for almost two decades. It is ironic that developments which promised much in the way of upgraded institutional performance when they first made their appearance now seem to be propelling academic libraries in the direction of becoming more self-serving than service organizations as more and more time and energy are spent on problems of internal organization and the articulation of intraorganizational tensions. This

is a process that can become so all-absorbing that its long-run costs to the user of the library often escape detection. Simply put, the mission of the organization tends to be unconsciously subordinated to the interests of those working within it.

This trend, coupled with the inevitable tendency of all types of organizations to become more complex during a prolonged period of growth, has contributed to a situation in which the administrative overhead costs of academic libraries have risen out of proportion to their positive impact on user services. In the halcyon days of the 1960s this phenomenon was obscured by the exhilaration brought on by constantly upward-spiraling budgets. Outlays for books and other materials reached unprecedented levels, magnificent new buildings blossomed on campuses across the country, and an array of new service programs came into existence. The general euphoria which resulted gave rise to a feeling that the funding trend would continue upward indefinitely with the result that any sustained interest in developing management skills in the area of measuring effective resource utilization was seriously inhibited.

This was a period when management at all levels in higher education was a relatively easy occupation for the simple reason that apositive response to most of the problems which arose was readily at hand in the yearly infusion of new money coming from a variety of sources: increased state appropriations, federal programs and private contributions. This is not to say that it was always a bed of roses, but any way one views it the management trauma associated with a period of rapid, sustained growth is far easier to cope with than the trauma which sets in when budgets stabilize or decline. In some respects it is only in the latter situation, when the cost/benefit problem has to be squarely faced if the vitality of the organization is to be maintained, that management has an opportunity to come into its own.

Several years ago, the author interviewed for a position at a major university, where the provost discussed the joys of being a graduate dean during the great outpouring of federal funds and increased state support for higher education which occured during the 1960s. Although the resources available to him at any given time were never sufficient to fund all of the programs and projects that a creative faculty could conceive, he nonetheless was able to respond with a budget allocation for most of them and satisfy the remainder with promises based on budget expectations for the next and succeeding years. He received his real baptism in administration and management, he said, when he moved from graduate dean to provost

at approximately the same historical moment when the federal largess began to dry up and state support started to level off. Suddenly, decision-making which in different circumstances had seemed relatively simple became excruciatingly complex and difficult when the expedient of relying on a constantly expanding budget was no longer available. Institutional priorities had to be established and funding decisions had to conform to them. The result was a complete reversal of his image across the campus. No longer was he a valued colleague in the intellectual enterprise who could shake the money tree almost at will, but "that administrator" isolated in the bowels of the administration building who was no longer able to sense the pulsing throb of the intellectual life of the university and identify with it. Administration and management, he said, suddenly took on sobering new dimensions as he found himself in a pivotal position in a situation where institutional aspirations had not even started to adjust to new budgetary realities.

One of the inevitable results of a prolonged period of growth in both business and nonprofit institutions is a tendency to gradually proliferate middle management positions. With respect to business and industry, Peter Drucker recently noted that during the economic boom of the 1960s, middle management positions increased at three times the rate of total employment.[3] An indication of the depth of the present economic recession can be seen in the rising level of unemployment among middle-level managers, a group that generally is not too hard hit unless the downward trend in the economy is severe. The increasing unemployment among this group reflects business's recognition that while administrative corpulence can be tolerated to a certain extent during periods of sustained growth, it becomes a distinct liability when the trend is in the opposite direction. Its remedial response is predictable, drastic and dictated by its instinct for survival. The organizational fat is simply trimmed by the issuance of the traditional pink slip.

Such a response is not possible in the case of an institution such as an academic library for a variety of reasons, the most important being that, in the environment in which it functions, the academic library really does not have to perform to survive.[4]

This is true primarily because the academic library is a monopoly, meaning that there are few if any realistic alternatives open to its clientele. Consequently, it tends to foster managerial attitudes which automatically assume that the level of services it offers at any given moment is the maximum that can be squeezed out of existing resources

and that any major improvements must come from additional funding. The result often is a kind of unconscious but nevertheless irritating managerial arrogance whose response to user suggestions, complaints, or frustrations frequently takes the form of lectures on the limitations of the budget or a truculent defense of hallowed traditions, rather than a hard, critical look at how effectively existing resources are being used.[5] The discipline of the market place in the long run forces institutions which have to live off earned profits (performance) into the latter kind of response (except, of course, institutions such as Lockheed, General Dynamics or the Pennsylvania Railroad, which receive government subsidies out of consideration of national interests). This discipline just is not operative on the college or university campus where the reaction to a budget crisis is primarily political rather than managerial, i.e., placing the burden of solving the university's budget problems almost entirely on outside agencies. It is the defensive and political nature of this response, based as it is on the assumption of maximum operational effectiveness, which is becoming increasingly irritating to both those who use academic libraries and those ultimately responsible for their funding. What is operative here is the frustration generated by constantly increasing budgets providing less than adequate services, compounded by a managerial attitude which maintains that the only way to improve the situation is through further infusions of additional funds. The analogy does not fit perfectly, but this is an attitude similar in many ways to the myopia with respect to exploring acceptable alternatives which prolonged the agonies of the Viet Nam War.

Although he was not speaking specifically about academic libraries, but about public service institutions in general, Roland N. McKean, an economist at the University of Virginia, expressed an opinion which was carried by the Associated Press wire service in the spring of 1974, with which many users of academic libraries might identify. He was quoted as saying, "as a consumer I do feel put upon regarding the quality of my goods—but not so much because my hotdogs are 30 percent chicken and bread crumbs; it is because my public goods often seem to be 70 percent baloney."

Angry frustration such as this, slowly working its way upward through a labyrinth of political channels, is the motive force behind the paranoia which has permeated every public body which has anything to do with the financing and control of public service institutions of all kinds in recent years. This phenomenon has been particularly visible in the field of higher education where governing boards, coordinating

comissions, and legislatures have been increasingly wont to ask such difficult questions as: Just what does the university or college produce and what is it costing to produce it? A natural consequence of this attitude has been increasing pressures for institutions of higher education to "become more businesslike" in their operations, meaning that far more attention than before should be paid to effective resource utilization, including documentation, with respect to results in terms of society's considerable investment in the enterprise. Parenthetically, it might be added that these pressures from outside agencies, which can be lumped together under the term "accountability," are probably a stronger factor motivating change in institutions of higher education than any internal desire to really come to terms with changing times, circumstances, technology and societal needs. One might cite as examples the whole array of affirmative action and equal-pay problems with which higher education is presently reluctantly struggling, and the increasingly vocal pressures for networking and resource sharing among libraries within a single system or a definable geographical area.

Behind the reluctance of academic library administrators to move vigorously into the field of performance measurement is the heady experience of the past two decades, which fostered managerial attitudes which measure institutional and individual success in terms of the magnitude of resources commanded, not in terms of how effectively they are used.[6] The assumption, of course, is that a larger budget will invariably result in more and better services. In general, this is probably valid. However, the real question (often overlooked) is whether or not services have been upgraded proportionally to the real increase in budgets. The case of the U.S. Post Office in recent years should provide cause to reflect on the proposition that institutional performance is simply a matter of pouring in more money. Parkinson's classic study of the growth of the British Admiralty between 1914 and 1958 is also a case in point. He noted that in 1914, at the height of an arms race and when Great Britain had the largest navy in the world, it required only 4,366 officials to keep it in operation. Fifty-three years later, however, when the Empire was a fading dream and Great Britain no longer a great power, 33,000 civil servants were "barely sufficient to administer," as he put it, "the navy we no longer possess."[7] Lest it be assumed that what Parkinson described was an isolated phenomenon rather than a predictable behavior pattern of bureaucratic organizations, it might be worth noting that, under the goading of Governor Jimmie Carter of Georgia, the U.S. Navy recently admitted

that of the 3,584 captains on its rolls, only 182 actually command fighting ships. This is ninety less than the number behind desks in the Pentagon and only 5 percent of the total roster.[8]

There is no questioning the fact that academic libraries, having experienced their own sustained boom in the 1960s reacted institutionally in a manner similar to both industry and the military with respect to the gradual accumulation of unproductive administrative overhead costs. Ironically, what is presently viewed in industry as middle-management fat to be trimmed off as quickly as possible, represents in the academic library environment a resource of very significant proportions if the imagination and the will exist to convert it to the energy needed to revitalize and upgrade service programs during a period of stabilized or declining budgets. In some respects, it almost seems as if Divine Providence may have interceded in preparing academic libraries for the difficult period which lies ahead by providing a camel-like mechanism for storing energy during a period of abundant sustenance which can be called upon later when times are difficult. Unfortunately, the library's body chemistry is not the same as the camel's, which automatically converts the fat stored in its hump to water and food as the grazing becomes scarce and the water holes further apart. Consequently, there is no guarantee that the reasonably complex internal organizations which are the product of a twenty-year period of sustained growth will be seen as a significant source for the manpower needed to augment old and mount new service programs during a time when few, if any, new positions will be forthcoming.

In what may have been one of the most significant articles in recent years on the management of academic libraries, Arthur McAnally and Robert Downs called attention to the declining status of library directors, particularly at large, research-oriented institutions.[9] Although the authors entitled their article "The Changing Role of Directors of University Libraries," it was the disturbing evidence of the directors' declining status and influence within the university's organizational hierarchy which was the focal point of their concern. In attempting to explain this phenomenon, they cited a wide variety of historical and sociological developments affecting higher education within the recent past which have significantly complicated the library administrator's life and which are mostly beyond his or her control. More importantly, in several key sections the authors provide more than a hint that the declining status of library directors might somehow be related to something far more personal—a declining confidence

within the top echelons of the host institution in their ability to achieve a level of managerial competence equal to the radically changed circumstances in which higher education presently finds itself. Put another way, university administrators pressed from without and from within on the issue of accountability, and struggling to maintain program quality in the face of reduced budgets, possibly expect a level of leadership from library directors which often has not been forthcoming—something which transcends more elaborate documentation for increased budgets. This is not to say that the problems cited by McAnally and Downs are not real, nor that they can all be alleviated without some real expansion of base budgets; it says only that *some* of them can, and that library directors are not totally at the mercy of forces beyond their control. Furthermore, there is every reason to believe that a dynamic, successful effort to find and document more effective ways to utilize present resources is the surest way to (1) re-establish the managerial credibility and status of library directors, and (2) lay the groundwork for more sympathetic budget hearings both on and off campus.

In some respects, the most important aspect of the McAnally-Downs article is its reflection of an increasing awareness among a significant number of library directors that higher education, along with academic libraries, has entered a new phase in its history in which many of the shibboleths of the past will be inadequate. Perhaps the clearest manifestation of this is to be seen in the interest shown among directors of large research libraries in the Management Review and Analysis Program (MRAP) developed by the Association of Research Libraries' Office of Management Studies.

The MRAP evolved out of a management study of the Columbia University Libraries, conducted by the firm of Booz, Allen and Hamilton, and sponsored by the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) and the American Council on Education. MRAP is the most sophisticated effort to date to bring about fundamental change and improve the management of research libraries.

The MRAP began in the summer of 1972 with a pilot program involving three libraries. By the end of 1974, two more groups of libraries (totalling fifteen) had committed themselves to the program whose basic objective—to bring about the internal changes needed to make research libraries more responsive to the needs of present and future users—can hardly be quarrelled with. It proposes to accomplish this objective through an intensive self study of present management practices and procedures, utilizing a great deal of staff involvement at

all levels. In essence, the MRAP was conceived as an instrument for creating an open, supportive and consultive—as opposed to an authoritarian—working environment which would in turn foster better utilization of total staff capabilities leading to upgraded institutional performance.

Participation in the program requires a substantial commitment of manpower and other resources on the part of the participating library. In this respect, it is similar to any other in-depth self-study. In a typical situation in a large research library, from forty-five to sixty people will be actively involved as members of the study team and its task forces for from seven to eighteen months (in some cases even longer). For the second group of libraries to undertake the program, the direct manpower costs "averaged about 200 manhours per month per library."[10] Considering the fact that most academic libraries claim to be suffering shortages of personnel, an investment of five FTEs over an extended period indicates the level of expectation—with respect to results—of those who have committed their institutions to the program. In addition, because of its costs, the MRAP will naturally and inevitably command the time and energies of the best people on the staff, as managing an investment of this magnitude cannot be delegated to other than "the best and the brightest" without running a serious risk of failure.

The overall impact of the direct and indirect costs of the MRAP on a library's service programs during the period of its implementation is probably difficult to determine. The impact is probably significant however, since when the main organizational concern is focused inward for any appreciable length of time it is inevitable that service programs will suffer to some extent. This subject seems to have been ignored in what attempts there have been to assess the MRAP's effectiveness. At the moment, its advocates seem content to accept its basic *a priori* assumption that once the intensive self-analysis of internal procedures is set in motion the inevitable long-range result will be a significant improvement in institutional performance.[11] Again, as in the case of its impact on service programs during its implementation, there has not been much in the way of published research which puts solid foundations under the castles which have been built in the air.

What have been the results of the program to date? From the evidence available at the time this paper was being researched—eight reports of the MRAP study teams and the material distributed by the ARL's Office of Management Studies—there is disappointingly little hard evidence to indicate that the program has moved the

participating libraries toward the kind of substantive internal changes, both attitudinal and structural, which would lead to a better utilization of resources. What emerges from the reports of the study teams is a picture of highly structured, intensive exercises in group participation in dissecting and analyzing internal policies and procedures, during which the articulation of a host of major and minor grievances relating to working conditions emerges as a predominant theme. The importance of this aspect of the study-team reports should not be minimized as it suggests that in application, the MRAP has a built-in potential for creating an organizational structure that could be more cumbersome and less capable of making timely and effective decisions than the traditional bureaucracy it seeks to modify, and consequently more expensive to operate.

The problem lies in the MRAP's basic methodology—an intensive, prolonged self-study which by design excludes any attempt to measure institutional performance in terms of effective resource allocation but limits itself to a critique of internal management policies and procedures. This approach, concentrating as it does on the general conditions of the internal working environment, inevitably opens up the possibility of the MRAP becoming an expensive mechanism for focusing all of the latent discontent, justified and unjustified, which exists in any large library, no matter how well managed. The cathartic and therapeutic effects of such an exercise can be considerable, and probably have been, in the participating libraries. Indeed, it is one of the goals of the MRAP to set just such a process in motion. However, the danger with respect to the crucial problem of resource allocation lies in the difficulties of stopping it once it has been set in motion.

The MRAP is in effect a two-stage program with implementation committees replacing the original study teams and task forces once their recommendations have become a matter of record. Inherent in this process is the distinct possibility of transforming what were conceived to be temporary organizations with a specific limited purpose into a more or less permanent alternative power structure paralleling the traditional bureaucracy and in competition with it.[12] This process would tend to develop to a greater degree in a situation where, for any number of reasons, a positive response to study-team recommendations was not forthcoming in a relatively short period of time.

Even interpreted in the best possible light, i.e., as an example of a type of participatory management, an organization thus encumbered would be extremely inefficient in terms of making timely and effective

decisions for the simple reason that information-sharing and decision-making have become organizationally confused, resulting in a situation where, so to speak, a touchdown cannot be scored unless all eleven members of the team have a hand on the ball when it crosses the goal line. A number of years ago, Roy Pearson, Dean of the Andover Newton Theological School, pointed out the dangers which arise when the distinctions between participating in the deliberations leading to a decision and decision-making *per se* become blurred. "It seems obvious to me," he wrote, "that we have made a fetish of togetherness, elevated group dynamics to the status of a holy cult, and by insisting that every forward step be taken by a team, guaranteed that some of the most important forward steps will never be taken at all."[13]

Nothing in the above should be construed as a blanket condemnation of the MRAP. The purpose is to create an awareness of the difficulties involved in utilizing group dynamics as a management tool in an environment where there is no automatic or built-in mechanism for forcing a concentration on institutional performance and no overwhelming interest in developing such a mechanism; in other words, there is no mechanism as effective as avarice and survival are in the private sector for eventually assuring due attention to effective resource utilization. Because it specifically limits itself to a study of internal relationships and procedures, there are serious questions regarding the MRAP's potential for producing the attitudinal structural changes necessary to make academic libraries more effective in resource utilization, and through this, more responsive to user needs during a prolonged budget crisis. In some respects, the MRAP reflects the fact that in spite of the blossoming romance between academic library administrators and modern management theory and techniques, it has not as yet produced the all-consuming passion for constantly monitoring performance which will guarantee their effectiveness. Lacking this catalyst, the romance has not really matured into the productive marriage it was anticipated to be.

Unfortunately, the two other trends affecting manpower utilization which were mentioned earlier in this paper—the movement toward full faculty status for academic librarians and the pressures for a more consultive or participatory environment—also seem to exhibit this weakness and are consequently propelling academic libraries to some extent in the direction of more complex and more labor-intensive administration infrastructures. Operationally, both tend to proliferate committees, task forces, and administrative and policy councils, whose

major concerns all too often are matters of governance rather than service programs. The result inevitably is a siphoning off of energy from service programs. This process has been imaginatively described by Lawrence Clark Powell as a "kind of library incest, an activity which takes librarians from fertile intercourse with library users into sterile intercourse with each other."[14] Peter Drucker is equally blunt, albeit without Powell's literary flair or economy of words: "Another common time-waster is malorganization. Its symptom is an excess of meetings. Meetings are by definition a concession to deficient organization. For one either meets or works . . . . There will always be more than enough meetings. Organization will always require so much working together that the attempt of well-meaning behavioral scientists to create opportunities for 'cooperation' may be somewhat redundant."[15]

What the events of the past ten years seem to indicate clearly is that it is possible to have an academic library which is efficiently administered, in which the full rights and privileges of faculty status are accorded to professional librarians, and in which the total staff is literally awash in a sea of collegial and participatory bliss, and still have a library with a low capability in the area of effective resource utilization.[16] Unfortunately, an argument can be made that this is the direction in which the three trends discussed here seem to be propelling academic libraries at the present time. Consequently, the question has to be faced as to whether modern management theories and techniques have the potential to solve the academic library governance problem in a manner which will not only reduce internal tension and dissatisfaction but also ensure a higher level of services to users.

I believe that they have this potential, but only if as a profession we can muster the courage to sally forth from the bastions of bureaucracy so meticulously constructed over many decades in search of a solution to this problem. Building the ramparts higher or stronger through the processes described above will only serve to perpetuate the fortress mentality which for too long has inhibited individual professional growth and institutional performance. There is no questioning the fact that the problem of governance is rapidly emerging as the single most important issue in academic librarianship. However, it is doubtful that there is any significant awareness of the fact that the manner in which it is solved will have a long-term effect on a library's ability to mount and sustain adequate service programs, particularly when higher education is entering a period of stabilized funding. To the extent that

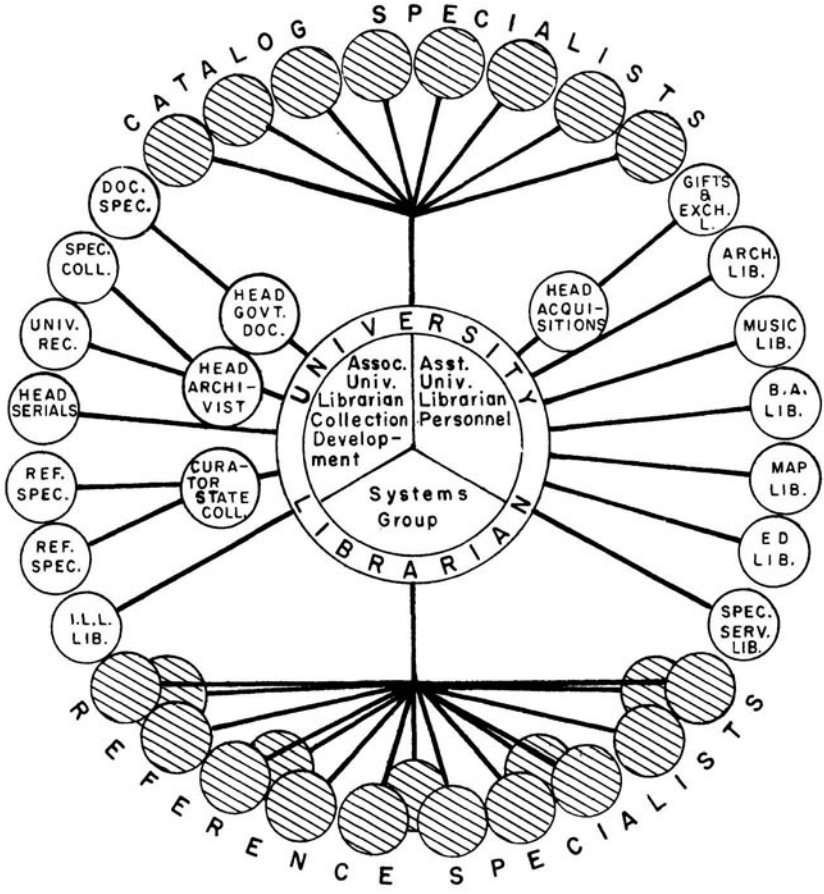

Figure 1 Library Administrative Office and Library Faculty for an Institution with a Centralized Reference Service in the Main Library and Three Branch Libraries.

this is true, what is at stake is nothing less than the validity of our claim to be a service-oriented profession.

Figures 1 and 2 represent pragmatic attempts, one of them still on-going, to get at the central problem of governance through a radical restructuring of the internal organization of two large research libraries. Both show the relationships between the library faculty and the library administrative office. Figure 1 involves an institution with a centralized reference service in the main library and three branch libraries. Figure 2 depicts an institution with a subject/divisional arrangement in the main library and four branch libraries.

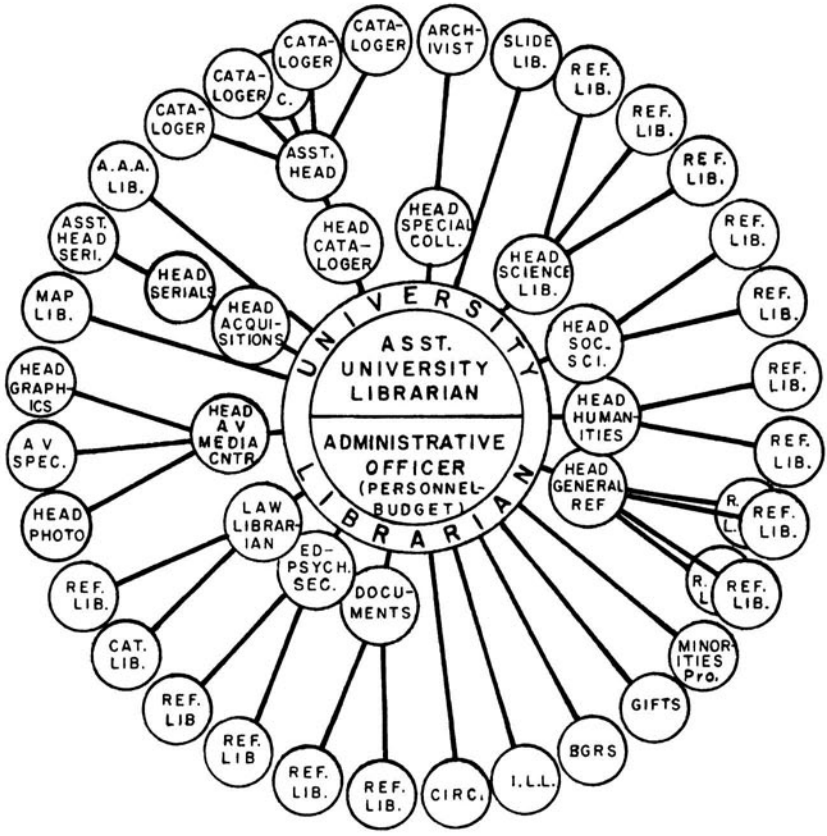

Figure 2 Library Administrative Office and Library Faculty for an Institution with a Subject/Divisional Arrangement in the Main Library and Four Branch Libraries.

In interpreting the figures, three important administrative concepts should be kept in mind: (1) the responsibilities of the individuals or groups inside the doughnut rings labelled "University Librarian" are primarily staff rather than line in nature; (2) the university librarian and his support staff are conceived of as a resource whose primary purpose is to create the kind of working environment which will encourage a high level of performance on the part of highly educated and trained professionals; and (3) the lines of communication between the library faculty and the university librarian are direct, almost entirely unimpeded by the layers of middle management and supervision characteristic of the traditional bureaucratic hierarchy.

Another important, operative concept represented in the figures is that to a significant extent all members of the library faculty are called upon to be managers—managers of the most important resource at their disposal, their own time and talents. In other words, it is the library administration's responsibility to create a professional working environment. It is the individual faculty member's responsibility to exploit it to the best of his or her ability.

Both figures reflect the view that some traditional middle management and supervisory positions in academic libraries are really not full-time occupations. In a sense, they have become technologically obsolete. This shows up most clearly in Figure 1 where in that particular library, during the time when the organizational concept represented was operative, there was no head of reference, no head of cataloging, no assistant director for public service and no assistant director for technical services. It probably should be added that this was a library serving an institution with an enrollment of 30,000 students, a book budget in excess of $700,000, and a collection of over one million volumes.

To say that certain traditional positions are no longer full-time occupations due to advancing technology and other factors, e.g., new types of graduates from the professional schools, is not to say that all of the functions associated with them can be totally dispensed with, but simply that they do not require a full-time person to carry them out. In the case of Figure 1, operationally it was the university librarian who filled in on an *ad hoc* basis when the occasion demanded. This occurred most often in instances where inter- or intradepartmental agreement could not be reached on policies or procedures, instances where relations with outside agencies or groups were involved, instances where personnel policies and budgets needed to be discussed, or instances where additional resources were needed for particular programs or projects.

At the institution represented by Figure 2, this concept is undergoing further development. Specifically, it involves tapping the person on the library faculty who is best qualified to handle a particular problem or project which would normally be handled by an assistant or associate director. This approach has survived one very difficult operational test in the library represented in Figure 2. Briefly, it involved temporarily calling upon the head of the humanities section to steer through the faculty library committee a potentially explosive program of critical importance.

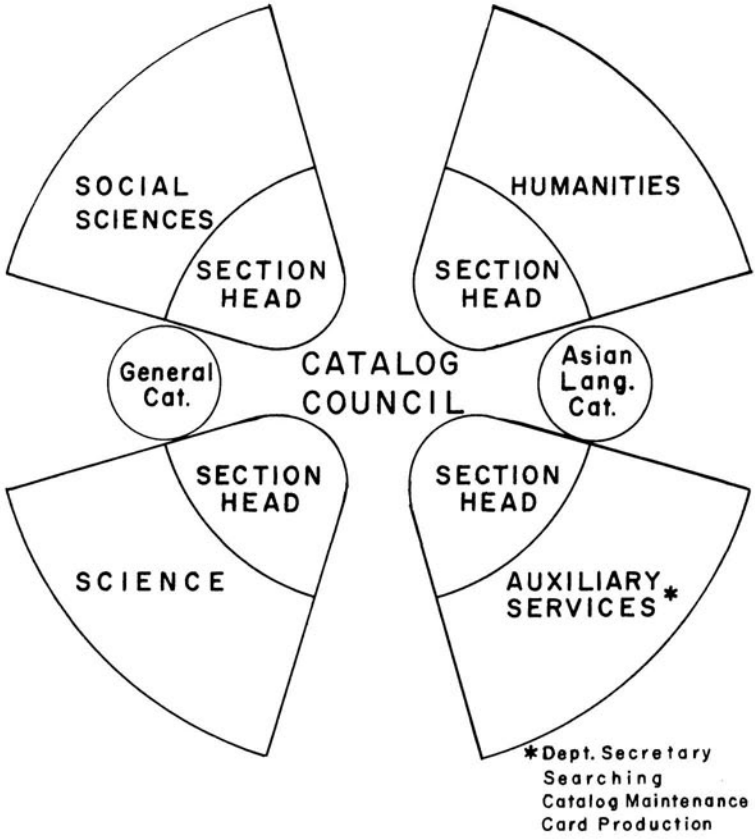

Figure 3 Catalog Service Organizational Chart.

The point here is that within a large library there are individuals who can be called upon for specific, temporary administrative assignments without permanently detaching them from the area where they can make their optimum contribution to the library's mission. This approach has at least two major merits worth considering: (1) it is possible to match talents and problems in a very specific manner, and (2) superb librarians who should be functioning at the daily interface between the library and its clientele are not permanently co-opted by the bureaucracy and set to doing the kinds of things that bureaucrats must do to justify their existence. Put another way, temporary administrative assignments avoid the on-going administrative overhead costs of permanent positions which are not really needed.

Figure 3 shows the organization of the catalog department as it existed in the institution shown in Figure 1. The day-by-day affairs of

the department were managed by a catalog council composed of all six professional catalogers, four of whom were section heads and two of whom were responsible for special original cataloging assignments. The council's chairman rotated monthly in alphabetical order. The chairman's responsibilities beyond the obvious were to be the contact person for anyone having business with the department and to take care of the middle-level drudgery inherent in any sub-organization, e.g., sickness, absence and vacation reports, and scheduling problems.

No claim is made that these attempts to develop a radically new library infrastructure have produced any fundamental truths with respect to library organizational theory. On the other hand, examples of a new organization vitality were and are certainly evident. These stem partly from the faculty attempting to adjust to a situation where individual performance is valued above traditional organizational lore and where the concept of supervision as traditionally understood is no longer applied to faculty. In essence, the environment symbolized by the organization charts provides opportunities for a good deal more individual initiative than was the case in the past. By the same token, individual responsibilities are also greater. In a very important sense, this latter aspect may very well turn out to be the most important by-product of this approach, since the natural corollary of an organizational structure which is less hierarchical and less bureaucratic is a reward system based on individual performance and achievement irrespective of administrative or supervisory responsibilities. In the last analysis, it is this aspect of the concept which seems to be the most promising in that it provides a framework within which the opportunities and the responsibilities for individual professional performance and growth can be roughly equalized. If this is true, the way would seem to be open for the academic library profession to break out of its bureaucratic mold and exploit the opportunities inherent in full faculty status, both individually and professionally, secure in the knowledge that to do so will result in better institutional performance.

Through the directness and informality of its communication network and its emphasis on individual performance and development, the kind of organization symbolized in the figures provides an alternative to the group dynamics approach to the governance problem advocated by the MRAP. Consequently, it has a better chance of avoiding the costly organizational rigidity which seems to be MRAP's inevitable offshoot—i.e., committees and task forces concerned with internal problems—and its almost inevitable tendency to turn into organizational *rigor mortis*. The demands on the entire

library faculty, especially the university librarian, are more rigorous in some respects than those of the traditional organizational structure. On the other hand, the rewards are also greater, particularly with respect to an enhanced individual and institutional self-image based on achievement.

As a final note, it should be added that the linchpin of the concept has to be the basic approach of the university librarian to the governance problem. If he or she can emulate M*A*S*H's Colonel Blake and "hold still for a lot" during the period of adjustment to a new set of professional relationships in the name of upgraded institutional performance, the academic library profession's latent Hawkeyes and Trappers will respond accordingly. As with institutions of all kinds, the key to performance is leadership at all levels. The type of organization discussed above at least holds out hope for encouraging its development.

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2. In these days when information, data and document delivery appear to be the major concerns of the academic library profession, it is sometimes forgotten that one of the essential functions of a research library is to ask as well as to answer questions, to teach as well as to provide the tools of instruction. This was never better stated than by Ernst Cassirer in a letter to Anton Warburg: "For the past three decades, the Warburg Library has quietly and consistently endeavored to gather materials for research in intellectual and cultural history. And it has done much more besides. With a forcefulness that is rare, it has held up before us the principles which must govern such research. In its organization and in its intellectual structure, the Library embodies the idea of the methodological unity of all fields and all currents of intellectual history. . . . May the organon of intellectual-historical studies which you have created with your Library continue to ask us questions for a long time." In Ernst Cassirer. *The Individual and the Cosmos in Renaissance Philosophy.* Mario Domandi, trans. New York, Harper & Row, 1963, p. xiii.

3. "The Vulnerable Managers," *Time Magazine,* Feb. 17, 1975, p. 30.

4. Many of the ideas expressed in the following paragraphs were brought into clear focus by: Drucker, Peter. "Managing the Public Service Institution," *Public Interest,* Fall 1973, pp. 43-60.

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